NOETIC REALISM TERMINOLOGY GUIDE

Noetic Realism

Meaning: The view that reality exists independently of our awareness of it, while recognizing that everything we know of reality is encountered through consciousness.

Example: A mountain exists whether anyone observes it, but our experience of the mountain is still mediated through perception and cognition.

The Real

Meaning: Reality considered in its entirety, including what is presently known and what exceeds present knowledge.

Example: The Real includes both the physical world we can investigate and aspects of reality we have not yet understood.

Noetic

Meaning: Relating to consciousness, cognition, knowing, intuition, or the activity of the mind in encountering reality.

Example: A noetic question asks not only "what exists?" but also "how is what exists known?"

Noetic Field

Meaning: The domain of conscious experience, thought, perception, interpretation, intuition, and meaning.

Example: Your perception of a forest, your thoughts about it, and the meaning you assign to it belong to the noetic field.

Causal Field

Meaning: The domain of observable processes, physical conditions, sequences, causes, effects, bodies, and measurable events.

Example: A tree grows because of sunlight, water, nutrients, genetics, and environmental conditions. These belong to the causal field.

Veiled Field

Meaning: Whatever exists beyond the limits of a person's present representation, comprehension, perception, or conceptual access.

Example: There may be aspects of reality affecting a situation that you cannot currently perceive or conceptualize.

The Veil

Meaning: The epistemic boundary separating what is presently accessible to consciousness from what exceeds its present access.

Example: Seeing only one side of a building does not mean the unseen side does not exist. Your perception is bounded by a veil.

Emanation

Meaning: The appearance or expression of something from a deeper or more fundamental reality into an accessible form.

Example: A thought may be understood as an emanation of underlying biological, psychological, environmental, and experiential processes.

Noetic Emanation

Meaning: A manifestation of reality within consciousness as thought, insight, symbol, intuition, perception, or meaning.

Example: Suddenly understanding a difficult philosophical idea can be described as a noetic emanation.

Causal Abstraction

Meaning: A conceptual model that simplifies or isolates causal relationships in order to understand them.

Example: "Exercise builds muscle" is a useful causal abstraction, although actual muscle growth involves many interacting variables.

Noetic Abstraction

Meaning: A conceptual representation generated within consciousness to organize experience.

Example: The concept of "justice" is a noetic abstraction used to organize judgments about human behavior.

Representation

Meaning: The form in which something appears to consciousness rather than the entirety of the thing itself.

Example: Your mental image of a person is a representation of that person, not the complete reality of the person.

Epistemic Boundary

Meaning: The limit of what can presently be known, demonstrated, perceived, or represented.

Example: Not knowing what exists beyond the observable universe establishes an epistemic boundary, not necessarily evidence of nothing beyond it.

Ontological Surplus

Meaning: The portion of reality that exceeds any particular representation or description of it.

Example: A person cannot be completely captured by a photograph, biography, diagnosis, or personality description. Something always exceeds the representation.

Known Reality

Meaning: The portion of reality currently accessible through observation, experience, reasoning, or reliable knowledge.

Example: The measurable properties of a physical object belong to known reality insofar as they can be investigated.

Unknown Reality

Meaning: Reality that is not presently understood or accessible to a particular observer or community.

Example: An undiscovered species represents unknown reality without requiring anything supernatural about it.

Veiled Reality

Meaning: Reality that may be real while remaining inaccessible or incompletely accessible to present consciousness.

Example: A phenomenon may exist before humanity develops the instruments or concepts necessary to detect it.

The Knower

Meaning: The conscious subject through which experience and knowledge occur.

Example: When you experience pain, the knower is the conscious subject undergoing that experience.

The Known

Meaning: That which becomes present to consciousness as an object of awareness, investigation, or understanding.

Example: The physical object you are examining becomes the known.

Knowing

Meaning: The relation between consciousness and what it encounters as reality.

Example: Scientific investigation is one structured form of knowing.

Noetic Relation

Meaning: The relationship between a conscious knower and whatever is being experienced, interpreted, or understood.

Example: Looking at a painting creates a noetic relation between you and the perceived object.

Phenomenal Appearance

Meaning: How something presents itself within experience.

Example: A sunset appears as colors and shapes within consciousness, regardless of the underlying atmospheric physics.

Ontological Independence

Meaning: The principle that reality does not depend upon an individual's awareness of it in order to exist.

Example: A distant galaxy does not cease existing because nobody is currently looking at it.

Epistemic Humility

Meaning: Recognition that one's knowledge is necessarily limited and potentially incomplete.

Example: Saying "I don't know" rather than turning an unanswered question into an absolute conclusion.

Noetic Realist

Meaning: A person who accepts the independence of reality while taking seriously the role and limitations of consciousness in knowing it.

Example: A Noetic Realist can accept scientific evidence while remaining aware that scientific descriptions are representations rather than reality in its entirety.